

# Guide to Performance Rubrics

## How do I use the rubrics?

1. Look at the targeted proficiency sublevel (e.g., Novice **High**, Intermediate **Low**, etc.) for the assessed task. There is no particular order of the rubric criteria (e.g., How do I use language, What language do I use, etc.)
2. Consider to what degree the evidence of the learner response meets the targeted proficiency criteria.
3. If there is not enough evidence to determine that the target was met, consider evidence for the proficiency level(s) below the target.
4. If the evidence exceeds the targeted criteria, consider evidence for the proficiency level(s) above the target.

## What is the purpose of the rubrics?

- describe characteristics of a specific proficiency sublevel and suggest ways of providing evidence
- give learners realistic expectations of what they are expected to do
- identify strategies for comprehension and communication

## Why do we need performance rubrics?

Rubrics that are based on the ACTFL proficiency guidelines describe what learners can do in the modes of communication through clearly defined performance descriptors of each proficiency level. They serve multiple purposes: to establish a baseline of performance at the beginning of a course, to inform instruction, and most importantly, to measure learner growth. The rubrics are written in simple “I can” statements easily understood by administrators, parents, teachers, and learners. Teachers use rubrics to assess learner performance; learners use them to self-assess and track their own progress. Over time sustained performance shows growth on the proficiency continuum. Unlike quizzes and discrete point tests, performance rubrics yield information that learners can control. Performance rubrics not only tell learners where they are, but where they are going and how to get there.

## Principles of Performance-Based Grading and Credentialing

In order for proficiency-based instruction to yield the desired results, i.e. learner growth in proficiency sublevels, the grading system must be aligned accordingly. In such a grading system, grades are determined by sustained performance of “I can” learning targets. They reflect learners’ language usage and, thus do not reflect behavior, attendance, grading on a curve, extra credit or assignments based solely on recall or discrete-items.

Performance-based credit (credentialing) allows learners who demonstrate **sustained** performance of the proficiency target(s) of a course to move immediately to the next level course. This will require scheduling adjustments or differentiation within the current class.

## How do I use rubrics to give feedback?

Use and refer to the rubrics frequently so that learners can self assess accurately and set personal learning goals and priorities (learner-to-self feedback)

- Design activities focused on 1-2 criteria rather than all the criteria.
- Use the rubrics daily in a holistic manner for quick feedback
  - during the practice and application phase of lessons (teacher-to-learner feedback)
  - during whole class instruction by using work samples or exemplars to show learners what the next sublevel looks like
  - during peer evaluations (learner-to-learner feedback)
- Develop a series of Integrated Performance Assessments for each course that reflect a pathway to the final course proficiency targets. IPAs in the beginning of a course reflect tasks in lower proficiency levels, IPAs in the middle of a course are more demanding and the final IPAs meet the final course targets. The rubrics will guide learners in their progress toward the course proficiency target.

Guide to Performance Rubrics

How do I use the rubrics to grade?

- Use the rubric within a 2-3 sublevel range of the learner’s performance for grading e.g., Novice Mid, Novice High, Intermediate Low but **not** Intermediate Mid)

Base the grade on **consistent** performance in **all** categories of the criteria on the rubric even if all but one area is at the next sublevel. For example, if a learner consistently demonstrates all **Novice High** characteristics in the Presentational mode: How do I use language, What language do I use, How well am I understood? but demonstrates **Novice Mid** for How accurate am I? the grade is based on **Novice Mid**. Teachers in International Baccalaureate programs may recognize the same performance-based grading principles. Teachers review the results of **all** the criteria in summative assessments only in order to determine the “best-fit” mark. The mark is not an average nor the highest mark but rather the result of sustained performance over time.

- Do not include grades (e.g., 0, 50%, 100%) given solely for completion of assignments (e.g. homework). Completion grades do not reflect learner performance.
- Grades given during the practice and application phase are not included in computing a learner’s final grade. Override the lower grades of a unit of study or marking period to reflect sustained performance at a higher proficiency (sub) level.
- Follow proficiency exit requirements provided by district or school course proficiency targets. See state recommendations at <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/ccr/Standards-Learning/WorldLanguages.cfm>

Grading Policy Example

Example: Level 1 Proficiency Target is Novice High for Interpretive Listening

Exceeds Proficiency Target	Meets Proficiency Target	Approaches Proficiency Target	Does Not Meet Proficiency Target
A	B	C	D
+ 1 sublevel target	= sublevel target	-1 sublevel target	-2 sublevel targets
INTERMEDIATE LOW	NOVICE HIGH	NOVICE MID	NOVICE LOW

For Middle and High School: The numeric value entered into Power School is approximately in the middle of the letter grade range (e.g., on a 7 point scale a B is 90%, but on a 10 point (AP) scale a B is 85%).

In elementary-school programs, teachers use the same *process* to determine learner proficiency based on learners’ sustained performance.

Example of how to input proficiency grades on a 7-point scale

Example 1:

Novice High Targeted Proficiency

Intermediate Low=95%

\*\*Novice High= 90%

Novice Mid= 84%

Novice Low= 75%

No measurable proficiency= REDO

Example 2:

Intermediate Low Targeted proficiency

Intermediate Mid= 95%

\*\*Intermediate Low= 90%

Novice High= 84%

Novice Mid= 75%

Novice Low= 69%

No measurable proficiency= REDO

Guide to Performance Rubrics

How do I use the Interpretive rubric?

This rubric is used to assess an interpretive task that consists of listening or reading authentic materials (i.e. created for native speakers by native speakers) for a specific purpose. In an Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) the interpretive task sets the stage for the first of three interrelated assessments.

Explanation of the Interpretive Rubric Categories

<p>How well do I understand the main idea?</p> <p>How well do I understand supporting details?</p>	<p>There is no expectation to understand or translate every word. The goal is for learners to demonstrate a general understanding what is heard or read.</p> <p>Learners build their interpretive skills by starting with identifying words and isolated pieces of information before they can identify the main idea and relevant details.</p>
<p>How well do I recognize words and structures?</p>	<p>Learners recognize, understand, and decode key words and phrases to get the gist of a listening or reading passage.</p> <p>Recognizing and understanding structures provide learners with clues to the main idea or details. Grammar is simply a tool to support understanding.</p>
<p>How well can I guess literal meaning from the context?</p>	<p>Learners progress through stages of understanding from literal meaning to inference. These stages parallel proficiency sublevels within contexts that progress from the very familiar to the unfamiliar.</p> <p>Learners begin with strategies such as recognizing visuals, high frequency words and cognates and progress in increasing complexity to using tone and/or organizational clues to patterns and structures.</p>
<p>How well can I infer meaning beyond what I read or hear?</p>	<p>Inference or “reading between the lines” requires a higher level of thinking that is challenging to learners with lower levels of proficiency.</p> <p>Learners rely on the same clues for detecting inference as they do for literal meaning but as their proficiency grows they are able to draw conclusions about a speaker’s/writer’s point of view, purpose, emotional state, etc. as well as predict and suggest alternate scenarios.</p>
<p>How Intercultural am I?</p> <p>Interculturality</p>	<p>Learners begin with concrete recognition of products and practices (“the what”) and gain insight into the perspectives (“the why”) behind those products and practices.</p> <p>They progress through stages of understanding cultural perspectives parallel to the proficiency sublevels.</p> <p>As language proficiency grows, learners demonstrate their understanding of culture by the way they react to or interact with a text or speech.</p>

Guide to Performance Rubrics

How do I use the Interpersonal rubric?

This rubric is used to assess a real-world interpersonal task carried out exclusively in the target language either through one-to-one r interaction or in small groups, to exchange and/or gather information. The interaction is spontaneous and the information exchanged is unrehearsed. In an Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) the interpersonal task builds from the interpretive task.

Explanation of the Interpersonal Rubric Categories

<b>What language do I use?</b>  Vocabulary Content/Context	Each proficiency sublevel describes a range of words, structures, and topics that learners use to converse.  Interpersonal tasks are spontaneous and unrehearsed.
<b>How accurate am I?</b>  Structure	If comprehension is not impeded by inaccuracies or mispronunciation and /or tone, use of appropriate vocabulary and grammar, learners should not be penalized for errors above their proficiency level.
<b>How well am I understood?</b>  Comprehensibility	Who can understand this interaction? Language learners in the early stages of proficiency make themselves understood mainly to sympathetic listeners. As their proficiency grows they are understood by a wider audience.
<b>How well do I understand?</b> <b>Comprehension</b>	Learners’ responses indicate to what extent they have understood what was said or written.  Clues for early stages of proficiency are the need for repetition, visuals, gestures and familiar contexts in order to participate in a conversation. Learners in the later stages of proficiency rely on a larger repertoire of vocabulary and structures.  When rating a learner’s comprehension, the teacher can estimate the sublevel of understanding by paying attention to the speakers’ use of language at the moment it breaks down.
<b>How do I use language?</b>  Function & Text Type	Function refers to the global tasks that a learner can perform (ask formulaic questions, maintain a conversation, create with language, narrate and describe, make inferences)  Text type refers to the quantity and organization of language the learner uses such as words, phrases, sentences, connected sentences, paragraphs etc. <i>p. 8 ACTFL Performance Descriptors</i>
<b>How Intercultural am I?</b>  Interculturality	Learners’ ease of gestures (from imitation to natural) and the richness of references to cultural products, practices, and perspectives indicate their level of interculturality.  As language proficiency grows, learners demonstrate an increasing ability to interact with people of the target culture.

Guide to Performance Rubrics

How do I use the Presentational rubric?  
Explanation of the Presentational Rubric Categories

<b>How do I use language?</b>  Function & Text Type	Function refers to the global tasks that a learner can perform (ask formulaic questions, maintain a conversation, create with language, narrate and describe, make inferences)  Text type refers to the quantity and organization of language the learner uses such as words, phrases, sentences, connected sentences, paragraphs etc. <i>p. 8 ACTFL Performance Descriptors</i>
<b>What language do I use?</b>  Vocabulary Content/Contexts	Each proficiency sublevel describes the range of words, structures, and topics learners use in their presentation.  Unlike the interpersonal task, which is spontaneous and unrehearsed, the presentational task is prepared and edited.
<b>How well am I understood?</b>  Comprehensibility (pronunciation, intonation, fluidity)	Who can understand the presentation?  Language learners in the early stages of proficiency make themselves understood mainly to sympathetic listeners.  As their proficiency grows they are understood by a wider audience.
<b>How accurate am I?</b>  Structure	Communicating the message is the primary goal and carries more weight than accurate grammar usage and pronunciation in the interpersonal mode.  If comprehension is not impeded by inaccuracies or mispronunciation and /or tone, spelling, punctuation, use of appropriate vocabulary and grammar, learners should not be penalized for errors above their proficiency level even when they have had time to prepare.
<b>How intercultural am I?</b>  Interculturality	Learners begin with concrete identification and references to products and practices (“the what”) and gain insight into the perspectives (“the why”) behind those products and practices.  They progress through stages of understanding cultural perspectives parallel to the proficiency sublevels.  As language proficiency grows, learners demonstrate their understanding of culture by the way they depict culture in a text or speech and how they react to their audience.

How do I use the Self-Reflection section of the rubric?

<b>Learning Reflection</b>
<p>This section is for <b>learners</b> to think about their performance. They should consider the following questions. Learners may ask teachers for help in identifying specific strategies for individual tasks.</p> <p>What helped me succeed in performing this task? What was difficult for me in performing this task? What could have helped me perform better? How can I prepare for the next time? What specific strategies did I use? Would a different strategy have been more useful?</p>

Guide to Performance Rubrics

How do I use the Feedback section of the rubric?

Feedback
<p>This section is for <b>teachers or peers</b> to provide strengths or areas for improvement with improvement strategies. It must be timely and very specific.</p> <p><a href="https://grantwiggins.wordpress.com/2014/04/15/what-feedback-is-and-isnt/">https://grantwiggins.wordpress.com/2014/04/15/what-feedback-is-and-isnt/</a></p>

## Guide to Performance Rubrics

### How were the performance rubrics developed?

The World Language Rubrics are meant to guide teachers' assessment of learning and learners' understanding of their performance, with feedback that informs both instruction and learning in a detailed and meaningful way. These rubrics can be used both formatively and summatively. They check performance leading to proficiency and combine elements from both the:

- 2012 ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners

(<http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/PerformanceDescriptorsLanguageLearners.pdf>)

and the

- 2012 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines

([http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/public/ACTFLProficiencyGuidelines2012\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/public/ACTFLProficiencyGuidelines2012_FINAL.pdf))

To make the tool user friendly and align it to state and national standards for language and interculturality, the rubric draws on the:

- NCSSFL/ACTFL Can-Do Statements or Progress Indicators for Language Learners

(<http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements>)

and the

- *South Carolina Standard for World Language Proficiency*

<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/ccr/Standards-Learning/WorldLanguages.cfm>

## GLOSSARY

### A few

3-4, "few is less than "some"

### A limited number

Consider the number relative to the number studied

### A small number (interpersonal/presentational)

1-2 per theme-.Consider the number relative to the number studied

### Authentic

print, audio and visual resources developed by native speakers, for native speakers, not for language learners

### Cognates

words that have similar spelling and meaning between languages

### Contextual clues

hints within the communication that facilitate the comprehension of unfamiliar words

### Create

use of language beyond memorization to express thoughts and ideas

### Credentialing

giving course credit for performance rather than seat time

### Connector words

transition words that fulfill a dual purpose in speaking or writing: to create flow in conversation or writing by connecting or transitioning between ideas, and also to indicate specific relationships between ideas. Without transition words, communication is choppy and disconnected.

### Extended discourse or language

refers to talking and writing at length in a sustained and cohesive manner.

### Familiar contexts, topics

related to everyday life; learned, seen, heard, or experienced many times in the past

## Guide to Performance Rubrics

### **Highly predictable**

learned language that can be anticipated based on the context

### **High Frequency Words & Phrases**

commonly used words and phrases

### **Holistic assessment**

method of rating based on overall quality where the focus is on what learners can do rather than on what they cannot do.

### **Infer**

process of figuring out the meaning of unfamiliar words or drawing conclusions from facts and reading between the lines

### **Inference**

an idea or conclusion drawn from evidence and reasoning —an educated guess.

### **Integrated Performance Assessment**

a multi-task or cluster assessment featuring three tasks, each of which reflects one of the three modes of communication —interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. The tasks are interrelated and build upon one another. All three tasks are aligned within a single overarching theme. ( p. 9 *Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment*)

### **Interpretive Mode of Communication**

one-way communication through reading or listening

p. 114 *Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment*

### **Interpersonal Mode of Communication**

two-way exchange of information in which negotiation of meaning takes place orally—face-to-face or by telephone, or in writing through electronic messaging.

p. 114 *Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment*

### **Main Idea**

principle point of a communication—sums up the primary message.

### **Mostly**

almost entirely; chiefly, on many or most occasions; usually

### **Negotiation of Meaning**

interaction in which individuals work to understand each other and to be understood through requests for clarification, comprehension checking, and confirmation checking, such as “Could you repeat that?” “What do you mean by...?” So you’re saying...”

### **Performance vs Proficiency**

refer to evidence of what a language user is able to do with language. One can work in a performance range long before one is able to sustain an equivalent proficiency level.

Both performance and proficiency reflect purposeful communication tasks, mirroring real-world uses of language. However, there are significant differences between performance and proficiency. See chart below.



Guide to Performance Rubrics

ASSESSING PERFORMANCE VS. ASSESSING PROFICIENCY  
HOW ARE THESE ASSESSMENTS DIFFERENT?

Assessing Performance	Assessing Proficiency
<b>Based on Instruction:</b> Describes what the language learner can demonstrate based on what was learned	<b>Independent of specific instruction or curriculum:</b> Describes what the language user can do regardless of where, when or how the language was acquired
<b>Practiced:</b> Tasks are derived from the language functions and vocabulary that learners have practiced or rehearsed but which are applied to other tasks within familiar contexts	<b>Spontaneous:</b> Tasks are non-rehearsed situations
<b>Familiar Content and Context:</b> Content based on what was learned, practiced, or rehearsed; all within a context similar but not identical to how learned	<b>Broad Content and Context:</b> Context and content are those that are appropriate for the given level
<b>Demonstrated performance:</b> To be evaluated within a range, must be able to demonstrate the features of the domains of a given range in those contexts and content areas that have been learned and practiced.	<b>Sustained performance across all the tasks and contexts for the level:</b> To be at a level, must demonstrate consistent patterns of all the criteria for a given level, all of the time’

ACTFL PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNERS, 2012 Edition

Pieces of Information (Interpretive)

Details irrelevant to the main idea often associated with Novice learner responses

Presentational Mode of Communication

one-way oral or written communication where information is presented to an audience with no possibility of negotiating meaning (see Negotiation of Meaning)  
p. 114 *Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment*

Radicals

graphical components of Chinese characters

Some

more than a few

Sublevel

A low, mid, or high designation given to proficiency levels (i.e., Novice **Low**, Novice **Mid**, Novice **High**)

Supporting Details

Major or minor points that support the main idea.

Text Type

refers to the quality and organization of language used by a speaker or writer (from word to phrase to sentence to connected sentences to paragraph levels)

Timeframes

general periods of time as expressed in tense, temporal adjectives, adverbs and phrases

Viewing

the act of interpreting visual information, as in posters, paintings, signs, ads, TV, movies, clips, etc.